
Regional Council Activity Report

December 19, 2007



Executive Director's Report

On December 12, 2007, the Arizona Data Estimates and Projections Task Force (ADEPT) issued a final report containing 28 recommendations for improving population and labor force estimates. The recommendations will enhance access to critical data needed by communities and businesses, representing a new way of doing business that will improve the accuracy of population estimates and labor market information in the state.

ADEPT was created by executive order in December 2006 following discussions between regional planning agencies and the Governor's Office. The recommendations for enhancement of Arizona's data estimates focus on four main categories: Governance, Policy and Procedures, Program Management, and Data Collection and Technical Process. The recommendations are already bearing fruit: On December 28, 2007, Governor Napolitano announced the consolidation of Arizona's economic research under one department. The Arizona Department of Commerce (ADOC) will now house the economic research functions of both the ADOC and of the Arizona Department of Economic Security. The combined Research Administration will provide more efficient and accurate economic analysis and forecasting to Arizona communities, businesses, planners, lawmakers, economists and others.

Other recommendations under consideration by the Governor include the development and implementation of a new State Demographer function at ADOC; increased transparency in population estimates by providing access to data and methods; and the establishment of a community challenge process that will allow member agencies to provide information to the state to ensure estimates and projections are as accurate as possible.

What does this mean to MAG? The importance of accurate population numbers goes well beyond simple statistics—population numbers are used to distribute millions of dollars in state-shared revenues. In each of the past three decades, MAG has paid for a mid-decade census to be conducted in the region to help measure our rapid population growth. These special population counts are growing increasingly expensive, and if a mid-decade census is conducted in 2015, it is projected to cost our region much more than the \$8 million spent on the census survey conducted in 2005. Our hope is that the recommended enhancements to the current population estimates process will result in a level of confidence that will render a mid-decade census unnecessary. Because of the length of time needed to collect the funding for a mid-decade census, we would need to have a reliable system in place by 2011.

We are grateful to Governor Napolitano for taking on this important issue and for increasing the quality of research data that the state produces.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Action Items



Regional Council Approves Plans for Regional Office Center

The MAG Regional Council approved several key items to move the agency closer to the development of a Regional Office Center. Among the items approved were a signed Letter of Intent with the landowner to purchase property and a Memorandum of Cooperation between MAG, the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) and Valley Metro Rail (METRO). The proposed office center would be located near First Avenue and McKinley, adjacent to the light rail system. Other items related to this project that were approved at the meeting were terms for a development agreement with the City of Phoenix, rankings of Design-Build teams, and a resolution of indemnification with Ryan Companies.

The Regional Office Center is a strategic and long term solution to address the need for additional office space among the regional transportation agencies—including MAG, RPTA and METRO. This is especially important for MAG and the RPTA, which are rapidly outgrowing their current space. The agencies are currently leasing office space from the City of Phoenix, which has informed the agencies of a need for the current space and projected increases in leasing rates. It is anticipated that the Regional Office Center will reduce the cost of office space, providing a lease-to-own option in which the three regional agencies will have the opportunity to own a tangible asset and avoid high leasing rates in the future.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Five Percent Plan for PM-10 Receives Unanimous Council Approval

Following months of staff work by MAG and its member agencies, the Regional Council approved the MAG 2007 Five Percent Plan for PM-10 for the Maricopa County Nonattainment Area. Collectively, the plan includes 53 committed control measures. The plan demonstrates that the committed measures will reduce PM-10 emissions by at least five percent per year and demonstrates attainment of the PM-10 standard by 2010. In order to reduce PM-10, a broad range of commitments to implement measures were received from the state, Maricopa County, and the 23 local governments in the PM-10 nonattainment area.

Key measures used to meet the annual five percent reduction target in PM-10 emissions and to demonstrate attainment at the monitor include plans for paving and stabilizing unpaved roads, shoulders and alleys. In all, 276 miles of roads and

alleys and another 289 miles of unpaved shoulders will be paved or stabilized by 2010. Maricopa County, which enforces the fugitive dust control rules, submitted a \$23 million package of commitments, including hiring 91 additional personnel to assist in training and enforcement. The Arizona Department of Transportation has also committed to adding rubberized asphalt, which reduces tire wear emissions, on portions of I-10 and State Route 143. Other commitments involved restrictions on leaf blowers, open burning and off-road vehicle use.

For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.

Regional Council Approves Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Assistance Programs

The FY 2008 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget includes \$200,000 for the Pedestrian Design Assistance Program and \$300,000 for the Bicycle/Shared Use Design Assistance Program. The Regional Council gave approval to the following projects for funding from the Design Assistance Program: City of Scottsdale, 70th Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection (\$55,000); Town of Gilbert, Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming Demonstration Project (\$75,000); Town of Gilbert, Bicycle Crossing Safety and Improvement Demonstration Project (\$90,000); and City of Peoria, New River Underpass at Olive Avenue (\$125,000).

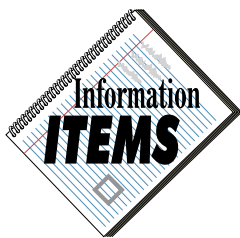
For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

Council Approves Regional Bikeway Master Plan

The Regional Council approved the MAG Regional Bikeway Plan. The Bikeway Master Plan serves as the guide for improving, expanding and connecting the MAG region's bicycle facility network. The MAG Pedestrian Working Group, the MAG Bicycle Task Force, the Transportation Review Committee and the Management Committee recommended approval of the MAG Regional Bikeway Master Plan, which was developed with Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds previously approved by the Regional Council.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director (602) 254-6300.

Information Items



Regional Council Receives Update on Commuter Rail Strategic Plan

Members of the MAG Regional Council received an update on the Commuter Rail Strategic Plan, which will establish a framework for implementing commuter rail service in Maricopa County and northern Pinal County. Consultant work has been underway on the Plan since February 2007. The MAG consultant provided a briefing on the study process to date, including proceedings of the Commuter Rail Stakeholders Group. The present schedule anticipates completion of the project in February 2008. The analysis addresses physical, operational and financial opportunities and constraints with stakeholders. Some of the proposed goals for the Commuter Rail Strategic Plan include employing commuter rail to shape

growth; providing a seamless and cost effective commuter rail option; promoting sustainability through the implementation of commuter rail; and increasing public/private cooperation to implement commuter rail.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, 602-254-6300

Regional Council Receives Progress Report on the Building a Quality Arizona Project

The Regional Council approved a recommendation to have MAG work cooperatively with the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Arizona Councils of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations Association (COG/MPO Association) in developing the transportation framework studies that will set the future transportation direction for Arizona.

Over the past year, the COG/MPO Association has been meeting to discuss growth and transportation issues. As a result of these meetings, a statewide Reconnaissance Study has been initiated, and in July 2007, the Arizona Department of Transportation authorized \$7 million for transportation framework studies. The purpose of the studies is to define transportation needs and potential solutions for the transportation challenges facing Arizona. In addition, ADOT intends to work on a preliminary list of critical needs that would be completed in May 2008.

The Regional Council agreed to work cooperatively with ADOT to provide information that will describe the transportation challenges facing this region, including representative projects that are part of the approved Regional Transportation Plan. In addition, the Regional Council agreed to assist ADOT in describing future needs as part of the transportation framework studies.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting



The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, January 30, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include project change amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2008-2012 MAG TIP and material change to the ADOT Program; Conformity Consultation for an amendment to the 2008-2012 TIP; upcoming Human Services grant opportunities; discussion of the development of the FY 2009 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget; Draft MAG 208 Water Quality Management Plan comprehensive amendment for the Town of Buckeye; MAG federal funding process update; programming of projects for MAG federal funding in the Draft FY 2009-2013 MAG Transportation Improvement Program; and the MAG Human Services Resource Assessment Project.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.